

BBC Learning English
Words in the news
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Pope in bible reading marathon



Pope Benedict read the opening words of the book of Genesis live from his apartments in the Vatican at the start of a week-long Bible reading marathon on Italian television. David Willey reports:

The Pope began this **seven-day, non-stop Bible marathon** by reading **the story of the creation**.

He wants Catholics to return to reading the Bible and feels that **the scriptures are being neglected in the modern world**. A **Russian Orthodox prelate** took over the Bible reading from the Pope after a few minutes and then it was the turn of an Italian Protestant leader who read **with great emphasis** the story of Adam and Eve being **expelled** from the Garden of Eden. One of Italy's most popular actors Roberto Benigni took over to read the story of Cain and Abel. The Italian tenor Andrea Bocelli sang Bach during the first interlude.

Rome's **Chief Rabbi** had originally been scheduled to read immediately after the Pope but he **pulled out** after complaining that the event had become, in his words, 'too Catholic'.

The television broadcast of the Bible will continue all week, day and night, on a satellite educational channel. Earlier in the day the Pope opened a synod of Catholic bishops from around the world who will be debating how to give a better knowledge of the Bible to Catholics. In his **homily** the Pope attacked the **godless character of modern culture**.

David Willey, BBC, Rome

Vocabulary and definitions

seven-day, non-stop Bible marathon	week-long, without stopping, reading of the bible
the story of the creation	the account or tale about how the world was first started
the scriptures are being neglected in the modern world	people today are not reading or taking notice of the holy writings of religions
Russian Orthodox prelate	high ranking official in the Christian Church with many members in Greece, Russia and eastern Europe
with great emphasis	showing or saying that something is very important or worth giving attention to
expelled	forced or made to leave
Chief Rabbi	most senior leader and teacher in the Jewish religion
pulled out	stopped being involved in an activity (here, the bible-reading marathon)
homily	speech about a piece of religious writing or religious advice about how people should think or behave
godless character of modern culture	people nowadays who are no longer interested in behaving according to the laws of any religion

More on this story: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/7653456.stm>

Read and listen to the story and the vocabulary online:

http://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/learningenglish/newsenglish/witn/2008/10/081006_pope_bible_marathon.shtml